GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3710
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2014
AVAILABILITY OF MEDICINES
Rai Shri Prem Das

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has formulated/implemented schemes/ programmes to improve the availability of essential medicines in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the fund allocation and the procurement and distribution mechanisms under the schemes, State-wise;

(c) the details of availability of free drugs in the country, State/UT-wise; and

(d) the other steps taken by the Government to improve availability of medicines in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI NIHAL CHAND):

(a) to (c):Public Health being a state subject, the primary responsibility of providing free essential medicines rests with the State Governments. Under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Central Government has been supplementing the efforts of States/UTs to strengthen their healthcare system including providing free drugs/ funds for free drugs to States/UTs under the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) and National Disease Control Programmes for Tuberculosis, Vector borne Disease including Malaria, Leprosy and HIV/AIDS etc. Under NRHM, a concerted effort was made to sensitize the States towards the huge benefits of providing free essential drugs and funding available under the Mission was leveraged to support and reward States that agreed to launch free drugs initiatives. Much of funds for providing free drugs came from the State's own budget. Upto 5% additional funding (over and above the normal allocation of the States) under the NRHM was introduced as an incentive from last year i.e. 2012-13 for those States that introduced/implement free medicines scheme. 29 States/UTs have informed that they have a policy to provide free essential drugs to patients coming to public health facilities.

(d) For making available quality generic medicines at affordable prices to all, the Government launched Jan Aushadhi Campaign in November, 2008 by way of opening up of Jan Aushadhi Drug Stores (JAS). Since November, 2008, 166 Jan Aushadhi Stores have been opened in various parts of the country. Out of which 90 are functional. A New Business Plan has since been approved.